

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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-----142014Z 036342 /46

R 141635Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9299
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 1744

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROR, PDEV, WA, NI, US, SF
SUBJECT: OBASANJO-YOUNG CONVERSATION ON NAMIBIA

1. FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR POINTS IN AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S CONVERSA-
TION WITH GENERAL OBASANJO FEBRUARY 10 ON NAMIBIA.

2. OBASANJO SAID THAT NIGERIA HAD ALWAYS CONSIDERED THE
NAMIBIAN PROBLEM EASIER TO RESOLVE THAN ZIMBABWE. HE FELT
THAT SOMEHOW KISSINGER PERMITTED THE MANIBIAN ISSUE TO GET
BRUSHED ASIDE. BUGERUA FELT THIS WAS A GREAT PITY.

"NIGERIA VERY MUCH HOPES NAMIBIA WILL NOT BE A PAWN IN
THE SOUTH AFRICAN/ZIMBABWE RELATIONSHIP."

NAMIBIA MUST BE INDEPENDENT AND "WE KNOW WE MUST
EVENTUALLY CONFRONT VORSTER ON THIS JUST AS WE HAVE
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CONFRONTED SMITH ON ZIMBABWE." YOUNG SAID HE AGREED
AND "THE SOONER THE BETTER" FOR NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE.

3. YOUNG SAID SECRETARY VANCE TOLD AMBASSADOR BOTHA TWO
WEEKS AGO THAT THE US COULD NOT ACCEPT THE TURNHALLE
DECISIONS. THE TROUBLE WAS THAT, WHEREAS SWAPO MIGHT
BE STRONG DIPLOMATICALLY, IT HAD LITTLE MILITARY FORCE

FOR OTHER THAN HARASSING OPERATIONS. FURTHERMORE, SAM NUJOMA MUST BECOME MORE PRAGMATIC AND MORE PRACTICAL IN HIS METHOD OF OPERATION, LEST HE LOSE THE CHANCE OF EVER ESTABLISHING HIMSELF EFFECTIVELY IN MANIBIA. OBASANJO SAID NIGERIA HAD BEEN TELLING NUJOMA THE SAME THIN. NIGERIA WAS ALARMED BY THE TURNHALLE DECISIONS. EXCLUSION OF SWAPO FROM SUCH ARRANGEMENTS THREATENED THE POSSIBILITY OF IRREVOCABLE SPLIT IN NAMIBIA REMINISCENT OF THE ANGOLAN SITUATION. SUCH A RESULT WOULD BE "FRIGHTFUL." AND YET NUJOMA SEEMED TO SPEND HIS TIME FLITTING FROM CAPITAL TO CAPITAL RAISING AND SPENDING MONEY WHILE TIME FOR EFFECTIVE NATIONALIST ACTION WITHIN NAMIBIA WAS RUNNING OUT. GARBA THEN SAID "SAM Baffles US."

4. YOUNG SAID THAT A US ROLE MIGHT BE TO CONVINCE SOUTH AFRICA THAT NUJOMA WAS AN ACCEPTABLE INTERLOCUTOR IN NAMIBIA, AND THAT EVEN MUGABE SHOULD BE ACCEPTABLE IN ZIMBABWE. THE US MIGHT HAVE TO EXERT ITS INFLUENCE IN THIS REGARD.

5. OBASANJO ASKED WHEN A GENEVA CONFERENCE ON NAMIBIA MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. YOUNG RELIED HE DID NOT KNOW. OBASANJO SAID HE WOULD TRY TO GET SONNY RAMPHAL TO TAKE THE LEAD IN PRESSING FOR SUCH A CONFERENCE. HE SUGGESTED THAT A SCANDINAVIAN CHAIRMAN MIGHT BE ADVISABLE.
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